



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 17, 2010

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CARDIN APPLAUDS OFFICIAL CREATION OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON MINORITY HEALTH AND HEALTH DISPARITIES

Washington, DC – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**, home state senator for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), applauded the official elevation of the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD) this week to its new position as the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. Senator Cardin authored the provision in the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* that authorized this change.

“Inequalities in health status and health care exact an enormous human and economic toll on our nation. Their persistence means that millions of Americans are affected needlessly by a disproportionately higher burden of illness and mortality,” said Senator Cardin. “Our nation’s health status clearly depends on our ability to improve the health of our fastest-growing communities and eliminate the disparities that are evidenced by higher rates of infant mortality, and debilitating diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

“By elevating the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities at NIH to an Institute, the new health reform law creates the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. The new law clarifies the role of the new Institute Director as coordinator and manager of the NIH-wide minority health and health disparities portfolio. It also provides the new Institute with professional judgment over NIH-wide minority health and health disparities budgets and funding.”

As noted in the Federal Register, the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (1) Conducts and supports research, training, information dissemination, and other programs including centers of excellence, loan repayment, research endowment, and community-based participatory research initiatives, with respect to minority health conditions and other populations with health disparities; (2) Plans, coordinates, reviews, and evaluates research and other activities on minority health and health disparities conducted or supported by the NIH Institutes and Centers (ICs); (3) Develops a comprehensive strategic plan and budget that identifies and establishes priorities, objectives, budgets, and policy statements for the conduct and support of all NIH minority health and health disparities research activities.